

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency Funding

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Background

- Three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies created in 2017 in compliance with state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
 - Petaluma Valley
 - Santa Rosa Plain
 - Sonoma Valley
- County and Sonoma Water each have one Boardmember representative on each GSA Board

Groundwater Sustainability Agency Funding: Fiscal Years 17-18 and 18-19

For first two years (FY 2017-2018 and FY 2018-2019), the three GSAs were funded by member agencies, with Sonoma Water and County contributing a total of about \$1.3 million

Groundwater Sustainability Agency	County/Sonoma Water Contributions (2 year total)	Other Agencies Contributions (2 year total)
Petaluma Valley	\$573,332	\$366,666
Santa Rosa Plain	\$238,000	\$754,000
Sonoma Valley	\$468,932	\$471,068
TOTAL	\$1,280,264	\$1,591,734

Groundwater Sustainability Agency Funding: Fiscal Years 19-20, 20-21 and 21-22

- Fee studies began in 2017 to fund agencies for years 3, 4 and 5
- In August 2018, Petaluma Valley and Sonoma Valley GSAs ended fee studies and renegotiated member agency contributions, below, for a total of three years

Groundwater Sustainability Agency	County/Sonoma Water Contributions (3 year total)	Other Agencies Contributions (3 year total)
Petaluma Valley	\$530,750	\$132,250
Sonoma Valley	\$479,000	\$210,018
TOTAL	\$1,009,750	\$342,268

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Funding

- Fee study continued in Santa Rosa Plain
- March 14, 2019, the GSA Board agreed to a 'groundwater sustainability fee' methodology
- Fee is based on actual or estimated **groundwater use**
- Fee is based on the amount of water use, measured by the **acre foot** (about 326,000 gallons)
- Rural residential (domestic) groundwater users would pay an annual fee of **\$8-\$13**
- Large groundwater users would pay between **\$16-\$26 per acre foot of water** pumped annually
- Would be levied for **three years**, after which time the GSA Board could end, extend, or replace it with a different fee in order to implement the sustainability plan

Estimated Costs for User Categories

User Category	Total annual use (Acre feet)	Total annual estimated fees at \$19.25 per acre foot
Municipal water suppliers	5,197	\$ 100,039
Other public water systems	1,556	\$ 29,953
Urban well owners*	261	\$ 5,018
Rural residential well owners	4,361	\$ 83,949
Agriculture	5,346	\$ 102,903
School & golf course irrigation	791	\$ 15,227
TOTAL	17,511	\$ 337,089

**Note: Urban irrigation water user numbers are still being refined*

Concerns Raised Regarding Fees

- Paying for plan, not projects or programs
- Other basins aren't charging a fee
- Concerns regarding use of estimates
- Lack of clarity on groundwater issues and SGMA requirements



Alternative Plan Proposal – Three Year Commitment

To be decided by Board/Sonoma Water Board of Directors:

- Fees of groundwater users in unincorporated area of basin to be covered by annual contribution to the Santa Rosa Plain GSA made by the County and Sonoma Water

To be decided by GSA Board:

- Municipal water suppliers & Sonoma Water pay Groundwater Sustainability Fee based on five-year average of groundwater use
- The fees of urban groundwater users would be covered by a annual contribution by Sebastopol (excess Sebastopol contributions, if any, would be used to offset rural fees)
- Accompanied by a phased Groundwater Users Information Program (registration program)

Alternative Plan Proposal

Contribution by ...	Would offset fees of...	Annual Contribution/Fee	Three year total
County of Sonoma	Rural residential, other rural groundwater users	\$100,000	\$300,000
City of Sebastopol	Urban wells, with excess offsetting other rural users	\$23,800	\$71,400
Sonoma Water	Rural water users (as needed)	Up to \$140,000 (\$100,000 from Tribal Mitigation)	Up to \$420,000 (\$300,000 from Tribal Mitigation)
Municipal water suppliers would pay annual fees to GSA based on 5-year average use		~\$100,000	~\$300,000

Total Five-year Member Agency Funding for all GSAs (with Alternative Plan)

Groundwater Sustainability Agency	County	Sonoma Water	Other Agencies
Petaluma Valley	\$446,416	\$657,666	\$498,916
Sonoma Valley	\$399,466	\$548,466	\$681,086
Santa Rosa Plain (Alternative Plan)	\$419,000	\$539,000	\$1,081,000
GRAND TOTAL, all GSAs	\$1,264,882	\$1,745,132	\$2,262,502

Next steps

- June 13, Santa Rosa Plain GSA board meeting to consider final fee adoption and groundwater users registration program
- If approved, soft roll out of groundwater users program
- If fee approved, fee invoices to be sent to municipal water users
- If Alternative Plan approved, non-municipal users will not be assessed